

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLM #0228/01 0371138
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 061138Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5345
INFO RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0588
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9864
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3127
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4877

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000228

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS, OES/IHA FOR DANO WILUSZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: LIMITED EFFORTS TO ADDRESS INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

REF: State 192623

¶1. Summary: Government involvement in Indoor Air Pollution (IAP) issues in Sri Lanka is at an early stage. Although IAP was discussed at the country's first national symposium on air resource management in 2004, limited progress has been made in this area. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has done a preliminary study on indoor air quality management in Sri Lanka, while an NGO group has implemented a project in selected areas to improve indoor air quality in kitchens in rural areas of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) has allocated limited funds to deal with IAP issues, constraining prospects for effectively addressing this issue. End Summary.

INDOOR AIR POLLUTION PROGRAM

¶2. The Economics and Global Affairs Division of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is the responsible GSL office for handling IAP issues. The GSL has begun to review the IAP situation in the country by initiating a pilot project on indoor air management carried out by the National Building Research Organization (NBRO) with supervision from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. A preliminary report on this project has also been carried out by the NBRO.

¶3. Seventy percent of indoor energy use (primarily for cooking) in Sri Lanka comes from biomass. Although nearly 75 percent of the total population has access to electricity, it is mainly used for illumination purposes and seldom used for cooking due to high electricity fees.

¶4. The Ministry of Environment's IAP project was carried out from July through November 2006 and was designed to assess the indoor air pollution levels and the socio-economic and health conditions in selected households in urban and rural residential areas. The study sought to propose relevant measures to reduce and control indoor air pollution. Air quality monitoring was carried out for this project to evaluate levels of exposure to IAP in dwellings, assess the association between exposure to IAP and respiratory diseases, and to develop indicators of pollution, including:

- A) Sulfur dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuel;
- B) Carbon monoxide as an indicator for incomplete combustion;
- C) Respirable particulate matter and suspended particulate matter (SPM) as an indicator of smoke from opening the stove;
- D) Smoke and/or dust from indoor activities and characteristics of the house; and
- E) The extent to which the house characteristics and appliances influence the concentration of indoor air pollutants.

¶5. The study concluded that indoor pollutant levels were 2-3 times

higher compared to outdoor SPM. Carbon dioxide (CO) levels were 4-5 times greater indoors than they were outdoors. Indoor concentrations of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) were found to be 4 times higher than outdoor in rural areas. The survey also revealed some respiratory illness in some of the population involved in the sample. The study recommended improvement in monitoring of indoor and outdoor air quality; development of national guidelines on indoor air quality; carrying out more long-term monitoring programs (to enable more definitive conclusions); government taking leadership in urban planning; and all government agencies involved in housing to consider a review of the construction and building use methodologies and guidelines.

¶6. The POC for this project is Mr. Anura Jayatilleke, Director Global Affairs Division, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Tel/fax: 94-11-2887452.

COOKSTOVE PROGRAM

¶7. The Integrated Development Association (IDEA), with the support of UNDP and the Indonesia-based Asian Region Cookstove Program (ARECOP), is implementing a program to promote kitchens that conserve biomass energy, improve indoor air quality, and develop healthy living conditions and income generation prospects for the poor. The ARECOP and UNDP programs commenced in 2002 and 2004 respectively, and are implemented in 12 districts with the participation of a network of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) involved in sustainable development activities. The scope of the work consists of promoting the concepts of improving indoor air quality and construction of model kitchens incorporating the required equipment with the participation of the beneficiaries. The project covers the purchase of materials for chimneys and improved stoves. All other costs, including labor, must be provided by the beneficiary. The CBOs mobilize the beneficiaries and coordinate the activities in their respective localities. IDEA manages and monitors the program and assists in constructing the model kitchens at the national level and provides training and technical skills to control costs.

¶8. Under these two programs, over 300 kitchens have been improved, 30 NGOs/CBOs have been strengthened, and over 50 CBO members have been trained in related technical and social mobilization skills. In addition to the Kitchen Improvement Program, IDEA is involved in commercialization of improved stoves. According to IDEA, using improved wood stoves is an internationally proven strategy to reduce IAP. In this exercise, IDEA has established a fully commercial structure to produce and market the improved stove. At present, the annual production is over 300,000 stoves produced by 300 potters living in 12 districts. These stoves are sold in the market without any subsidies. This program commenced in 1991.

¶9. The POC for IDEA is: R.M. Amarasekara, Executive Director. Tel: 94-81-2423396, Fax: 94-81-4470649, Email: amare@ids.lk

FURTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

¶10. COMMENT: The Ministry of Environment's IAP study did not conclusively identify ways to improve IAP in Sri Lanka. Officials of the Ministry of Environment have acknowledged that further research with longer duration and including a wider sample of the target population is necessary to reach better decisions on how IAP issues can be addressed more effectively. The expansion of the IDEA kitchen improvement program could be a short term solution to mitigating the effects of IAP until more focused research provides more definite conclusions on how the issue could be handled on a national scale. Overall, while officials have made some efforts regarding IAP, it is unlikely that the GSL will make this issue a high priority in the near future. However, with greater awareness resulting from studies, and demonstrations of better stove technology, individuals and communities may become better informed and more motivated to reduce IAP within their own homes and communities.